

OCTOBER

ALASKA'S MAGAZINE

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The Alaska Sportsman



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Issue

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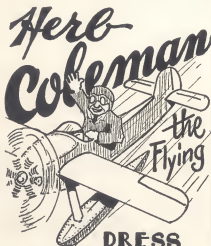


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The Alaska Sportsman

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The Alaska Sportsman

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The Official Organ of

The Alaska Sportsmen's Association

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Volume V. October, 1939. Number 10.

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Published monthly by Alaska Magazine Publishing Company at Ketchikan, Alaska. Western Advertising Agents: J. W. Greeley and Associates, Lloyd Building, Seattle, Washington. Central: Joe Godfrey, Jr., 360 North Michigan Ave., Chicago, Illinois. Eastern Advertising Agents: Irving M. Hoffman, Inc., 420 Lexington Ave., New York, N. Y. Yearly subscription in U. S. and Canada, \$1.50; 2 years, \$2.75; 3 years, \$4.00; 5 years, \$5.00. Single copies 15 cents. In foreign countries, \$2.00 a year. All rights reserved. Entered as second-class matter December 10, 1934, at the post office at Ketchikan, Alaska, under the act of March 3, 1879.

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AUTUMN ON THE KNIK RIVER
Matanuska Valley
Photo by Maurice L. Sharp

Main Trails and Bypaths

♦ Editorial ♦

IN VIEW of the slow growth of the great Territory of Alaska, the question may well be asked: "What is it that other countries have that Alaska does not have?" Great things have been claimed for Alaska in the way of natural resources, such as minerals, timber, fish, scenery and agricultural lands—yet, Alaska remains a frontier wilderness.

A comparison between Alaska and the Scandinavian countries of Sweden, Norway and Finland has often been made—to the outstanding credit of Alaska in the matter of resources and size. They have fairly similar climatic conditions and there seems no reason why Alaska should not be able to support populations of similar size. Still, Alaska has a population density of only one-tenth of a person for every square mile while Sweden, Norway and Finland have population densities of 39, 23 and 27 persons per square mile respectively.

IT HAS been pointed out that had the Pilgrim fathers settled at Sitka, Alaska, instead of Plymouth, Massachusetts, they would have found a milder climate, better soil and timber, and more game, furs and fish.

What, then, is the matter?

Harry Slattery, under secretary of the Department of the Interior at Washington, D. C., has just made an enlightening report after studying the question in considerable detail.

Outstanding reason for Alaska's lack of industrial and agricultural progress, according to Mr. Slattery's report, is the vicious cycle resulting from the inadequacy of planned immigration. He says:

(1) Underpopulation over a large area leads to excessively high transportation costs. (2) High transportation costs result in a high cost of living. (3) High living costs result in high costs of production. (4) High costs of production and transportation make most industries unprofitable. (5) Lack of industrial development results in seasonal unemployment. (6) High living costs and seasonal unemployment discourage immigration and encourage emigration. (7) All of which results in underpopulation.

PPOINTING to two experiments in planned immigration—the Metlakatla Indian colony and the Matanuska agricultural colony—the report concludes that at the present time further public investment in the development of Alaska such as that undertaken at Matanuska does not appear feasible and that if Alaska is to be developed it must be on the basis of private capital. It suggests a partnership of government and capital in the development of Alaska such as in the corporations that established the first European settlements in the original territory of the United States—the London Company, the Plymouth Company, and the Dutch West Indian Company. It is pointed out, too, that the Hudson's Bay Company, a similar organization, developed most of Canada, and that the British West India Company was responsible for British development of India. In the development of the West, Congress granted special charters, as well as substantial areas of land, to the great trans-continental railroads.

Is this the solution? We cannot say. One thing is sure, however—Alaska needs population, wants population. An odd situation, surely. Particularly since older nations, much less favored with natural wealth, are bursting their borders with unwanted people.



Above photo by Manley Sweasey. Others by Tom Jackson.

Two dogs are indispensable for hauling supplies and equipment to the traps and in bringing back animals that have been caught.

I'll Get Old Club-Foot Yet!

By Ed Ueck
As Told to Tom Jackson

RUNNING an eighty-mile trap line every six days, regardless of weather conditions and in temperatures as low as forty degrees below zero, is no job for a "Chechako." He shouldn't even think about it if the trap line location is over a hundred miles from the nearest town, as mine is.

From early in the fall until the close of the trapping season in April, I am alone with my two dogs to cover eighty miles of trap line laid out in the form of a great wheel, with only a one-day layover at headquarters camp each week before starting out anew. The two-dog team is necessary. In working such a long line two dogs are indispensable for pulling the light sled that I use to haul out supplies and equipment to the trap lines and to bring back animals from the traps—and those animals sometimes run as large as a 150 or 200-pound wolf.

I SAID my trap line was eighty miles long—that is, it is an eighty-mile circle, but there are several side trips of about seven miles each up canyons and streams adjoining the circle. The elevation of my trapping grounds, which lie near the headwaters of the Matanuska River, is about 4,500 feet. Snow comes quickly, thus making it easy for the dogs to haul the sled early in the fall when I am preparing the lines for the season.

Old Club-Foot's mate furnished a beautiful, dark-bluish pelt. It is the center skin hanging on the wall behind me, below.



About fourteen miles a day is my average travel on the circle, although I cover considerably more than that, of course, on the side trails. During the trapping season there are only six hours of daylight at the most, and it is long after dark before I reach

the trail cabin at the end of a day's hike. Even then, the day's work is far from complete. Besides getting something to eat for myself and feeding the dogs, I must skin and care for the furs I obtained on that day's trip. If an animal has frozen to death in a trap, I must hang it in the cabin and leave it until the next week so it will thaw out for skinning.

BLINDING storms are sometimes encountered far out on the trail between shelter cabins, and a biting wind with the thermometer at forty below zero makes it seem twice that cold. When a trap has been sprung, it has to be re-set with bare hands, and it must be done quickly and carefully. To expose the hands in that weather without mitts means that they will be frozen very quickly. Needless to say, frozen hands can easily spell disaster to a trapper who is a hundred miles from civilization.

Frequently, when it is quite cold and the weather is clear, the moisture will freeze out of the air and continually fall to the ground in tiny particles resembling very fine snow. There is sometimes a

The Alaska Sportsman

much as six inches of this frost on the ground at one time, though it is so light and fluffy that there is nothing to it and it blows away with the first breeze.

Although I've followed the trap lines and game trails of the Interior of Alaska for several years, I'm not an "old timer." Back in the fall of 1929, when things got tough, I was following the harvests. My original home was Wisconsin, but I'd worked my way from Texas to Washington State. From Washington I decided to go to Alaska.

WITH my somewhat thin bankroll, I bought a ticket for the North and headed directly from Seattle for the Matanuska Valley, which could be hardly found on a map, let alone a newspaper, in those "early" days.

When I swung from the northbound train at Matanuska, I was more enchanted than discouraged by the sight of the snowline that met the timberline in all directions. However, I had only two dollars and six-bits of hard money in my pockets, and none of the folding variety, so immediate work was imperative. Before the Colonization project, experienced harvest hands weren't to be found on every bush in that region. I went to work almost at once helping the few settlers in the valley with their harvests.

After looking over the surrounding country and seeing the high prices paid for fur that year, I soon decided to get into the trapping game, so saved all the money I could towards a winter grubstake.

When the harvest was over, I invested my money in grub and trapping supplies and was soon necking a five-hundred-pound outfit some hundred and twenty-five miles due north to a place known as Glacier Point, at the headwaters of the Matanuska River. I had a fair year, and after quite a bit of scouting about to size up the surrounding country and find a suitable layout for a big trap line, I returned to the valley in the spring, definitely committed to working for the Alaska Road Commission in the summer and trapping in the winter.

Next fall I chartered an airplane to transport myself and my outfit to trapping grounds I had picked out the winter before. The last day of September was clear, and a perfect day for the flight. We skimmed easily over country that had meant weeks of heart-breaking work the fall before, and in a few minutes we nosed down for a pontoon landing on Lake Leila, on the east end of Sheep Mountain, which is about half-way between Matanuska and the Richardson Highway on the divide between the Nelchina and Matanuska Rivers.

After unloading the six-months supply of grub and equipment, the plane zoomed up and was away, leaving me and a

I often stop to rest my two faithful dogs, Pinky and Spot, or to snap a picture.



When this picture was snapped, Pinky whispered that we'd had a pretty fair season.

pile of supplies on the shore of the lake. I seized an axe from the top of the pile and set to work at once to swamp a trail through the heavy growth of willows to the higher ground I had picked as the location for my headquarters cabin.

USING that point as a base, I gradually built up my trap line on the pattern I had laid out, with six cabins on the circumference of a circle whose center was the base cabin. I did a little work—as much as I could—each year until they were completed, and since then there have been three more cabins added, including the Government trail relief cabin. The relief cabin is on the route of the proposed highway between Palmer and the Richardson Highway, which would connect the Cook Inlet network with the Copper River country, Valdez, and Fairbanks.

Now, when I arrive on the trapping grounds to prepare for the winter season, my first job is to clean up my cabin and throw out the mess of debris that has been packed in by the big brown bears after my departure in the spring. The bears take over virtually everything after the trapping season, and they turn almost everything inside out looking for sweets and bacon.

They sleep in the cabin during the warm summer months to get away from the flies which are very bothersome, at times. I always leave all of my cabin doors—trail cabins as well as base camp—open when I leave in the spring. This saves the

bears the trouble of tearing the doors down, and saves me the trouble of building new doors each fall. The bears are so powerful that I don't think a man can build a door of materials at hand out there in the wilds that will resist the attack of a Brownie if he really wants to get inside.

AFTER the cabin is cleaned out and made liveable again, I clean out my cache and store my winter supplies. These caches are built on poles and are about eighteen or twenty feet above the ground to keep the animals out. Pieces of tin are nailed around the supporting poles to prevent the black bears and Wolverines from climbing up to the cache. I use a ladder when I want something from it. This ladder, of course, is left in place only when being used, and is taken down afterward so animals cannot use it. The cache itself is a rude log cabin on a platform atop the poles, and is designed to give safe outdoor cold-storage for supplies.

—Please turn to page 28



Cattle can be grazed in many parts of Alaska, from the Tanana River, near Fairbanks, south. This scene is in the vicinity of Juneau. Photo from U. S. Forest Service.

Clear the Land and Crops Will Grow!

II.

By Walter Weston

NEXT to Matanuska, the greatest agricultural area of Alaska is the valley of the Tanana River. This lies across the Alaska Range, 240 miles north of the Matanuska region. The agricultural areas of the Tanana River extend from McCarty, at the junction of the Goodpaster and Tanana Rivers, northward to the town of Tanana, where the Tanana River flows into the mighty Yukon. The valley, between these points, is approximately 205 miles long by airline, and 317 miles along the river. The maximum width of the valley is seventy miles.

This comprises about 7,000 square miles of land, although a considerable portion, of course, is unsuited to agriculture because of swamps, lakes, muskeg, and other geographic conformations. The usable farm land consists generally of bottom land, bench land, and some terrace land. Of these types, the south slope areas of the benches are the most desirable for farming purposes. It is the northernmost region available for agricultural settlement in Alaska at present.

The frost-free period in this district extends from about May 20 until September 5. For the years 1932-1936, inclusive, the highest temperature recorded was 89 degrees, while the lowest, at Fairbanks, was minus 66 degrees. The maximum temperatures were recorded in June and July, while the minimum was in January, 1935. During the growing months, beginning in May, the normal temperature shows a steady rise,

reaching its peak in July. Sunrise comes at 4 a. m. on May 1; at 2:30 a. m. on June 1, and at 1:30 a. m. on July 1. Sunsets come at 9:30 p. m. on May 1, and 10:30 p. m. on July 1. During June and July, and in parts of May and August, there is a continuous twilight throughout the short night.

Winter weather, while cold, is healthful and invigorating. The average annual snowfall for the years 1932-1936 was 59.39 inches. Owing to the lack of high winds in this region, snow remains evenly distributed over the ground most of the time. It is usually light and feathery, and remains in this condition for a large part of the winter.

Annual precipitation ranges from 8.5 inches to 16 inches, with approximately one-half of it occurring during the growing season. Since heavy rains rarely occur in this region, the harm done by erosion is almost negligible.

The soils of the region have a physical constitution that is well adapted to the retention of moisture, and because of the short periods of drought and low rate of evaporation, cereal crops can be produced with as little as eight inches of total precipitation.

Dry weather in late spring and early summer sometimes checks plant growth to such an extent as to cause low yields; or subsequent moisture may prolong the growth and thus lessen the chance of maturity, increasing the danger of injury by frosts, both before and after cutting. Drizzling rains and cloudy weather are common in late summer, and may cause difficulty

in curing hay. It is believed, however, that freshly-cut vegetation does not deteriorate as rapidly in the cool, moist air of the rainy season here as it does in warmer climates.

Most of the land in the Tanana region is hillside and old river-bottom land. The south slope hillsides are preferred because they mature crops earlier than the bottom lands. The soil of the Tanana is generally of a very fine sand classification, which covers most of the bottoms, while the Fairbanks silt loam is distinctly a slope soil. This Fairbanks silt loam conforms very closely with the Knox silt loam farming soils of Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Missouri, Nebraska, and Wisconsin, and is the best all-around agricultural soil of the Interior of Alaska. It is well drained, yet retentive of moisture; not over-acid, easy to cultivate, and is very productive.

As in the Matanuska Valley, the most important farm crops in the Tanana Valley are grain and potatoes. Oats and barley are grown for grain and forage, with seeding usually completed by June 1, and harvesting by September 1. When early varieties of grain are grown, and if they are seeded early enough, a crop is assured every year. The average yield for oats is about fifty bushels an acre.

Only spring wheat is grown, and such varieties as Siberian, Reward, and Garnet are matured without difficulty, giving average yields of twenty to thirty bushels an acre. Barley gives an average yield of about twenty-five bushels an acre, and is an important grain crop as feed for dairy cattle and swine.

The bottom lands are best suited to hay, and give an average yield of from two to three tons an acre of the usual crop, a mixture of oats and field peas.

THE chief cash crop of the Tanana Valley is potatoes, and although they have met a stiff market competition from imported Washington and Idaho potatoes, it has served to emphasize the importance of producing a quality product. The average yield in potatoes runs from four to seven tons, and prices range from \$2.50 to \$5.00 a hundred pounds, according to quality and marketing facilities.

As in the Matanuska Valley, peas are an assured crop. On the sandy soil of the bottom lands they have a strong growth and produce well. The seed of such early varieties as Alaska and Gradus have been produced regularly over a long period of years.

Currants are an excellent fruit crop, with the white varieties out-producing the red. Black currants have not proved so successful in the past. Red raspberries have been produced commercially for several years, and when grown on the south slopes, mulched with straw, they have produced well.

Strawberries of a hybrid origin have produced excellent crops, and the fruit is grown quite generally as a garden crop. One rancher produces on a commercial basis, and the fruit sells readily at a fair price. Wild fruit, such as high bush and low bush cranberries, red raspberries, red currants, and blueberries are quite plentiful.

Many of the hardy varieties of ornamental shrubs and flowers are grown in the home gardens, including roses, lilacs, peonies, lilies, spirea, cotoneaster, bush honeysuckle, silverberry, serviceberry, and Siberian flowering almond. Giant hybrid delphiniums are very hardy and grow well, with recorded heights of eight to nine feet.

The region is well suited to dairying, with summer pasture available for four months out of the year. The remainder of the time the stock must be fed, and oats, barley, peas, vetch, native grasses and brome grass are all grown for winter feed. Because of the cold winters, dairy barns should be well constructed and provided with artificial heat. The prevailing breed of cattle in this area is Holstein.

Hogs are also produced profitably, pastured in the summer and fattened on barley, wheat and peas. American Hampshire is the favorite breed.

The thriving town of Fairbanks is the principal mar-

ket for farm products, as this city supplies the needs of the many mining camps that form its principal industry. Shipments to points on the Tanana and Yukon Rivers are made by steamboat through Nenana, sixty miles from Fairbanks.

Fairbanks is the northern terminus of The Alaska Railroad, which operates year-round service. The Richardson Highway links it with Valdez and Cordova on Prince William Sound, 410 miles southeast, and the Steese Highway connects with Circle City, 160 miles north on the Yukon River. A fair amount of trade is carried on along the rivers by the stern wheel steamboats, reminiscent of the Mississippi River packets of an earlier day, and airplane service is maintained to all points of importance throughout the year, whenever weather permits.

AN AREA of about 200 square miles in the vicinity of Healy, on the north slope of the Alaska Range, is considered suitable for sheep raising, and enough hay and forage can be grown there for winter feed. The many thousands of square miles in the Kuskokwim and Yukon Valleys offer potential agricultural land, but have not been utilized to date because of their remoteness and inaccessibility.

Another potential farming area is the Kenai Peninsula, the western part of which,

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Matanuska Valley is only one of several agricultural areas in Alaska.

Photo by Maurice L. Sharp.





Photos by Milotte Studio.

The bears walk leisurely from the woods to the falls where the water boils around their legs and pours down their backs.

Black Bears of the Naha By Alda Orton

WHEN the black bears come out of their dens here in the vicinity of the Naha River, just above Roosevelt Lagoon on Revillagigedo Island, they are neither sleek nor handsome, but quite lean and shaggy. The fur is quite often rubbed off in spots, as if they have been restless in their long sleep.

We see the first tracks of the black bears in the mud in the vicinity of our homestead late in April. It is then, too, that we notice the deep little holes where the bears have dug up the fiery-tasting, cone-like shoots of the skunk cabbage. Later on, we see the bears themselves in the grassy patches around Jordan and Heckman lakes above our home. There they appear very black against the fresh green of the grass.

About the middle of June the bears begin to prowl up and down the Naha looking for salmon. I really think they have scouts down at the rapids, at the mouth of the lagoon, to send up reports when the first run of sockeye salmon goes through. By the time the sockeyes have crossed the lagoon and come up the quarter mile of river to the Naha River Falls, the bears have begun to gather around the pools at the bottom of the five-foot falls.

The bears continue to gather until, by the time the humpback salmon come in, and the river is really full of fish, all the bears in the whole river valley have arrived for a real bear festival which lasts for several weeks. And they are plentiful here, these black fellows, and really very harmless, it seems to me. I enjoy watching them from the windows of our home.

We see them constantly, walking up and down the river or out on the sandbars opposite our homestead. Some we recognize year after year, and give names, such as, "Old Brown Patch," "Lop-ears," "White Shirt," "Necktie," and so forth.

The cubs are cute and comical. Sometimes they are singles, sometimes twins, and occasionally triplets. They are all sizes, from little, round, roly-polys, to big, half-grown cubs, but they are all surprisingly alert and quick. When they cry they sound just like young children. Sometimes they wail as if they are lost and occasionally they bawl as if they have just received a good spanking. At other times they growl and snarl as if they are fighting.

The Naha Falls is just around the bend of the river from our home and we often row up quietly in the evening to watch the bears at their fishing. We have seen as many as fifteen there in fifteen minutes. They will walk leisurely from the woods to the ledge where the water boils around their legs and pours down their backs and, without any apparent trouble, pick up a big salmon out of the swift water and carry it off in their jaws, to be eaten back along the forest trail or on shore.

The salmon leap high into the air in their effort to negotiate the falls on their way upstream to spawn, and I have often seen the salmon literally leap right into a bear's open mouth. Usually, though, the bears wade into the water for the fish, sometimes right in up to their shoulders.

At one end of the ledge that constitutes the falls is a big pot-hole which often gets filled with fish—for once, in the salmon can't get out. Some of the lazier bears will go and look into this hole the first thing, to see if their supper is waiting there for them. They take the fish very nonchalantly. The salmon wriggling in their mouth apparently bothers them not at all. They appear to feast on the fish and I really can't conceive of the bears being as hungry as their intake of salmon would indicate them to be. Probably they are just laying-in fat for the long winter hibernation.

The younger bears always give place to the older ones, hanging around in the bushes at the side of the river until the bigger ones get their fish and are gone. On the far side of the falls is a maze of deep-worn trails which the bears have pounded down in their age-long travels to the feeding place. The whole vicinity of the falls is padded down and in the summer it is strewn with parts of fish and reeking with the smell of bears and salmon.

I have never known a black bear to harm anyone. They have many quite human characteristics, especially one of rising on their hind legs. Then they seem very humorous caricatures of man. They are not particularly friendly to each other and when they meet they often pass as though there were no other bear within miles, giving absolutely no sign of recognition.

I really think the black bear is "the most ludicrous, the most human and understandable of our wild animals," as at least one writer has described him. One day, while watching the bears at the falls, a bear spied me from a distance. Placing his front paws on a log which was about shoulder-high, and crossing them, he took the attitude of a preacher at a pulpit and stood there eyeing me for a long time. It was the bear, however, who eventually yawned—not I.

It is possible to approach quite close to the bears at the falls, for they have notably poor eyesight and their delicate sense of smell and hearing avails them little there—the falls drown out any noises the human spectator may make and the spray from the falls usually creates an air current that blows away his scent.

ONE evening when we went to view the bears, our dog accompanied us in the row boat. When she saw an old bear with two small cubs on the bank a few feet away, the temptation to chase them was too great. She jumped out.

Like a flash, the bears disappeared behind a tree with the dog in pursuit. But, quicker still, the dog rushed back with the old mother bear after her, while the cubs went up the tree like little black streaks. The dog remained meekly in the boat with us, after that.

The bears never bother our goats which we let roam the vicinity. I did see one bear try to catch a hen, one morning, however. The bear made great bounds across the pasture, but the hen took to her wings and easily outdistanced him.

The bears may visit our strawberry patch or walk around the dooryard at night, but we don't mind that. In the daytime they either circle our clearing or cross to the other riverbank.

We miss the bears when they move on up the river after the fish later in the season. They follow the salmon to the spawning grounds. The coho run lasts into December and by that time the most wide-awake bear, with a good layer of fat under his hide, is ready to den up.

ONE evening last fall, I heard a fierce old bear-fight. At first the sounds emanating from the battleground seemed more human than any noises I thought bears could make.

My husband, Milton, was late in getting home from a trip up to the lakes that evening and, with my two sons, I was sitting on the porch waiting for him. Suddenly, from the nearby hill came the most horrible, long-drawn-out cry of pain I had ever heard—as if a man had been suddenly caught and life was being squeezed out of him.

"What did Daddy do that for?" cried our four-year-old son, David.

The outcry came again and sounded still more like a human being in mortal agony.

I grabbed our old .45 and a handful of shells which I loaded into the gun as I ran up the trail toward the falls.

There was nothing unusual on the hill, but down below the falls a tremendous battle was going on. The roars and bellows were all confused with snarls and growls.

I had no inclination to go closer, not knowing what minute one of them might charge headlong up to me in the woods. I quickly slipped down the hill and back to my boys. I was not interested in learning which bear would win the fight.

Sometimes a mother will catch a salmon, take it to her cub, and they will eat it together. There are well-worn trails from the woods to the feeding-place at the falls on the Naha.





Photo from U. S. Forest Service.

If the cannery owners had known we took their fish, maybe they would have been glad—the trap washed out after we left!

Confessions of a Fish Pirate As told to Joseph Lester

II.

THE season's heaviest run of fish was on one dusky evening as the Gray Cloud plied down Frederick Sound.

Salmon filled the traps faster than the cannery tenders could brail them. The Company boats were running night and day between trap and cannery. They could not stand by the traps for long. And so, greater opportunities for fish pirates came. . . .

The Gray Cloud had just sold a good-sized load of salmon to a tender operated by a small Ketchikan cannery. The tender was a long way from home and could not wait for us to transfer our fish to her hold, so we tied our boat alongside and as the two vessels ran down Chatham Strait at eight knots we unloaded our salmon.

We received cash for the fish. Then the tender waved goodbye and promised to meet us in Pybus Bay within the next few days to buy more of our fish if our luck held out.

As soon as the tender was gone, the Skipper went below and immediately divided up the five hundred and sixty dollars received for the night's catch into five equal amounts. There was a five-share agreement on the boat; three men and the Skipper each received one share for their services. The Skipper, who was also the owner of the vessel, took the fifth share for the use of his boat. We divided the expense for gas, oil and food. In piracy, men want their money immediately after each raid—sometimes attorney's fees must soon be paid!

We landed at the next trap before darkness. Usually a pirate approaches under cover of night, but we were pretty cocky and took lots of chances. During the season we had raided every trap in the Straits and Sound and had made good hauls of salmon from all of them.

Sometimes the watchmen were not as easy as the first pair we encountered. At the next trap we hit, the trapmen became pretty nasty when we told them that if they wouldn't sell we would take their fish, anyway.

What made us so mad about the whole blasted deal was that the bums drank our rum, then wouldn't sell fish. We pushed our luck and decided to take the fish in the face of their objections.

The Skipper stood in the corner of the cabin near the door. The watchmen sat on their bunks. I was leaning against the door, smoking a cigarette.

I was pretty hot about the failure to get fish and intended to take drastic measures to obtain them. However, the Skipper beat me to the draw. He calmly drew a .45 Colts from his hip pocket and pointed it toward the watchmen.

"Now do you think we mean business about taking those fish? Sit right where you are, and don't move an eyelid." Then the Skipper spoke to me out of the corner of his mouth—"Get that trap lifted."

Without hesitation, I ran out to the boat, got Berry and Eric, and we went to work.

Now, it's tough enough to pull a trap with five men, but three have to work like demons to raise one when it's full of

fish. We couldn't spare a man to keep watch for oncoming boats and, as luck would have it, this was the one night we needed a lookout.

Well, we worked fast enough. In twenty minutes we had her half raised, but we were so intent upon our work that we almost got three years free rent for our labors.

I was straining on the net when a gleam of light flashed across the waters and caught my eye. I looked up. Not over two hundred yards away I saw coming, head-on, a green and a red running light—the lights of a tender! Man! they were certainly drawing close to us!

I instantly whistled our signal for such an occasion. Berry and Eric dropped the net and with two bounds were at the lines of the Gray Cloud. I started to jump aboard—then thought of the Skipper. He was in a tight pinch—he had to keep the watchmen covered and he had to retreat at the same time.

I raced back to the cabin. The Skipper had heard my signal, but was as calm as a sleeping pup when I reached his side. "Get their rifles," he said, "and outside with you!"

I jumped to the corner where two rifles were leaning against the wall—scooped them up, and backed out of the cabin. The Skipper stepped out the door, slammed it behind him, and turned to the boat. I was close behind as he ran.

As I crossed the trap, I tossed the two rifles into the spiller web. There the watchmen could retrieve them when they lifted for fish. There would be no robbery

charge against us! I reached the boat as it pulled away from the tender log. I had to jump for it. The water was widening between the trap and boat. The Skipper had jumped to the pilot house, pulled the wheel hard over, and jammed the throttle down.

The boat leaped away from her berth. The Skipper wheeled her straight toward the oncoming tender. There was only a few feet of space between the two boats when our Skipper hauled the wheel hard-over-to-port. Our decks took water from the sudden change of course. When she righted again our vessel was a length away from the tender.

I heard harsh words coming across the water that divided the two ships:

"Halt, Pirate, or I'll fire my gun!"

Following this threat, I heard the tender's whistle blast three times—then three times again to halt us, but to no avail.

We sped on. "Fire your gun, you —," cried our Skipper, "and I'll fill that tub of yours full of lead." And he meant what he said.

THE tender didn't fire a shot, but maneuvered around and was soon in our wake in a hot chase. The boats seemed about even as to speed. It appeared to me that the captain who maneuvered his boat the best would win the race.

The Gray Cloud had one advantage—her draft was only six feet of water. The tender drew about ten. Our Skipper used this advantage and his knowledge of the waters to attempt a successful flight. He maneuvered the Gray Cloud over reefs and rocks that he knew he could pass over, but that the tender could not. Undoubtedly, he wanted the tender to crash on the rocks, but evidently the Skipper of the tender knew the waters as well, for he skirted every rock and reef we went over.

Though we did not wreck the tender on the rocks, by this maneuvering we gained distance and reached the channel of the Sound. We sped toward Point Kingsmill.

This did not end the chase. The tender pursued, mile after mile. As we rounded Point Kingsmill and continued into Chatham Strait, the Skipper exclaimed to me, "Damn him, he must be getting a bounty for pirate hides to stick this close

to us. He is going to lose the whole day and so will we, if things don't change."

But hour after hour, the situation didn't change. Dawn broke and in the light of day our chances of escape appeared nil.

The tender's Skipper became impatient when he saw he couldn't catch us and began to blast away on his whistle, signalling for us to halt. That failing, he stepped out on deck with a rifle and aimed toward us.

There was a puff of smoke and a splash of water alongside the Gray Cloud. It was followed by the dull report of his rifle. Our Skipper was furious. He started to swing his boat around and go back, board the tender, and fight it out hand-to-hand.

I grabbed the Skipper's wrists and stared into his face. "We want fish—not war. Now maneuver us out of this damn predicament."

He grinned good-naturedly. "Okeah, Matey, but I would like to get my hands on the guy who would shoot at an honest pirate."

TOWARD noon, our chance to escape came, at last, in a "veiled" sort of way. Up the Strait rolled a billow of fog a mile wide—and plenty long. The Skipper took a look at the charts. "I know those fog-bound waters by heart," he said. "Let Mr. Tender-Skipper come after me now!"

The fog closed around us as we entered the bank. It was so thick I could not see the bow from the pilot house.

The Skipper cut the motor and we drifted soundlessly. Behind us, we heard the chug . . . chug . . . chug . . . of the tender, and though we could not see him, the noise of his engines was plain.

He must have thought of the same plan we had carried out—he cut his engines off so that he could hear our engines. But there followed a dead silence and his case was hopeless.



Photo from U. S. Forest Service.

When I wanted to know how we were going to raise the spillers of the pile trap of the Diamond X Cannery at low water, I learned that the Skipper intended to cut the web.

The Skipper chuckled to himself. Berry laughed behind his palms. And Eric pinched a bit of snoose from his can and sat upon the rail in satisfaction.

Needless to say, I was relieved at the outcome. The tender finally gave up the battle and he gave up hard, for he had chased us a long way and knew that we must be somewhere near him, but exactly where was impossible for him to tell.

His engines seemed to groan when he kicked them over. When he passed we were so close to him that we could hear the bells in his engine room. He had not been gone long when we kicked up our engine and followed in his wake, but when we left our fog bank behind he was 'way down the channel and we didn't follow further. We knew of a trap, nearby, that had more sociable watchmen than the last trap we visited. . . .

III.

THE sea tossed us around so that the bow of the Gray Cloud dived down into its maw like a loon, then plowed upward again in an effort seemingly to reach the sky. The Skipper stood at the wheel and swayed with the rolling movements of the sea. The binnacle light pierced the darkness and struck the compass point. It was our only illumination.

"If we can land at a trap now there will be no patrol boats out and we can help ourselves to some salmon like an eagle helps himself—he just swoops down and takes what he wants in defiance of the laws of nature and man—and that's what we'll do."

"Yep," I answered the Skipper sourly. "If we can land this crate beside a trap without crushing in her sides—had you thought of that?"

He grinned and I saw the reflection from the dim light play across his countenance as he coolly analyzed the situation.

"Do you remember that standing trap down the Strait that belongs to the Diamond X cannery?"

I thought a moment, then answered in the affirmative.

"Well, we can come alongside that trap. It will be low tide in an hour and the net will be twenty feet out of water and we'll swing

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Five men can quite easily raise a trap, but three men have to work hard when it's full.





It was a rather tough winter that I spent at Nome, but though I missed a few meals, I managed to get along. This was Front Street.

Nome Was Like That By John B. Wallace

MY FIRST winter in Nome made me a sourdough, but it also nearly made me a living skeleton.

There were several periods of as long as three days when I did not eat. This was nobody's fault but my own. There was no reason for anyone to starve in Nome or any other part of Alaska. Anyone would gladly share his food for the asking. But I had the stubborn pride of a youth in his early twenties. I just couldn't bring myself to admit to anyone that I was hungry. I had borrowed money running up into the hundreds of dollars to play poker, but to ask for money for food—that was different. It seems silly now, but it didn't then.

I would not have remained in Nome that first winter of 1906-07, but I thought I had a steady job. Beverly B. Dobbs, the photographer, kept me only a few weeks until the first rush of visitors on the June

and July boats was over. He had a first-rate young lady assistant. She had experience in the finer points of developing prints, which I did not, and Mrs. Dobbs, too, could help if necessary. Mrs. Dobbs, I might add, was about the most beautiful woman in Nome and Nome's women did not lack for pulchritude, either.

When Dobbs tied the can to me, I was sorry I had not signed on for the return trip of the Steamer Ohio. After she had stove a hole in her bow, she lay in the roadstead for nearly a month trying to recruit a crew to take her back to Seattle. The offer of double wages finally enabled her to fill out her complement of men with disappointed gold seekers and others unable to find work. She arrived safely in Seattle after what, they tell me, was a somewhat hectic voyage.

When Dobbs let me go, the Ohio had just sailed. It was too late for me to get

Outside that way. However, I picked up a job sooner than I expected.

I had worked my way through college—as far as I had gone—by driving a laundry wagon. At one time I had a monopoly of practically all of the laundry work at the University of Washington and was making more money than some of the professors.

In Nome I had become acquainted with a driver for the local laundry. He had taken somewhat of a fancy for me and when he learned that I had experience in the laundry business he spoke to the proprietors of the laundry. The result was, I was furnished a wagon and horse and went to work on commission.

My patron, a good-natured Swede, whose kindness I will never forget, gave me part of his route and I succeeded in picking up enough extra business so that, with my liberal commission, I was doing

They tried putting in wharves along the waterfront, but the ice usually took them out in winter, leaving only a remnant in spring.



right well. In fact, I did so well that the proprietor, who had charge of soliciting and collecting, told me he could use me all winter if I cared to remain.

I'll never forget the day the last boat left. I knew I would be up there in the "Frozen North" cut off from all my friends and relatives for at least eight months. It made me feel pretty blue.

I found a fellow sufferer in a young male stenographer for one of the big mercantile companies. We decided to drown our grief in the flowing bowl. I seldom touched whiskey, but as my companion was ordering Bourbon, I decided to follow his example. We made the rounds of the saloons on Front Street and were ready to repeat the journey when I passed out.

I think we were about to engage in a game of pool. This, of itself, indicated my condition. My friend, the stenographer, was one of the best cue artists on the Seward Peninsula. Suddenly everything turned black and I did a dive under the pool table.

They took me home—so they told me—in one of the little puschats that Nome merchants used to bring up merchandise from their storehouses or the wharf—part of the wharf was still standing then, although the ice pack had taken out the greater part of it the previous year.

I had been buying whiskey with gold and receiving silver dollars in change. Consequently, my pockets were loaded with cartwheels. When they carried me up the stairs to my room, feet first, the silver fell out and the boys wisely decided that "white money" was made only to be spent.

When I awoke the next morning, I found some gold remaining in my clothes, but no silver. That had been used to finance the remainder of the celebration, my friends assured me.

I worked several weeks after the boats went out. Then one day, without warning, the boss told me I was through. Business had not held up as well as he had expected and he had decided to take over

the wagon himself. The miners had gone to the creeks to build up their dumps for spring sluicing and only the townspeople were left. When the boys returned for supplies they would bring in tremendous bundles of dirty clothes, but these trips were infrequent. Most of the miners would not be back for six weeks, in time for the first mail from the south.

That left me "out on a limb." Everyone had hired their help before the boats left. Only death created vacancies. I might add that residents of Nome were disgustingly healthy.

To make matters worse, not anticipating such a calamity, I had not been careful of my money and when the blow fell I was practically broke.

This was really due to an ambitious attempt to become an Alaska millionaire at the stud poker table. I had done fairly well, considering I was an amateur up against some of the best poker players on the American continent.

Then one night I met my Waterloo through the medium of three little deuces. That game will always stand out in my memory.

I had drawn deuces "back to back." My third card was an ace. That looked pretty good to me. I figured I might make "aces up" so, although the pot was tilted several hundred dollars by a player on my right, I stayed.

My confidence seemed justified. The next card was a deuce. My pair of deuces was the only pair showing. There was another ace in sight, but the man who had raised had only a jack for his high card.

I thought I had a cinch, so I bet right out. They all folded except the man with the jack. He was content, this time, to just see me. He hesitated for a moment in doing that.

THE next two cards dropped. I got a face card and my opponent got another jack.

My heart sank right through my boots. I had figured him for jacks, back to back, when he saw my last bet. However,

he could have made two pair and when he shoved in his stack I dug down in my pockets for every cent I had and called him. Sure enough, he had drawn out on me on the last card and showed three jacks. . . .

That game left me a financial cripple. There were several thousand dollars in the pot. When my job blew up, I had eight months of idleness, in the most expensive town in the world, ahead of me.

THE proprietors of the laundry, realizing, I suppose, that I had been given rather a raw deal, offered me extra work inside on rush days when a lot of miners would come to town and want their work done in a hurry.

I was a pretty fair laundryman when it came to soliciting business, but as an inside worker I was not so hot. Especially not as an ironer. I couldn't run the collar machine, so they put me at work with the women hand-ironers who did ladies' lingerie. These women, mostly middle-aged or older, were Swedish and they had a lot of fun talking about me in their native tongue.

We had a red-hot stove, in the center of the room, and tremendous one-piece hand irons which were placed in a rack against the belly of the stove. The irons weighed something less than a ton, with the result that most of the women had overdeveloped forearms that would have been creditable to blacksmiths.

When the men came in from the creeks, the merchants and the women in the Stockade had a pickup in business. Shirtwaists were being worn in those days, too, so the ironers had plenty to do.

My finish as an ironer came one day when I was doing an expensive bit of lingerie. One of the old women said something to me that I did not quite hear. I asked her to repeat her remark and stood there with the hot iron motionless for a few seconds. That is fatal. The trick in handling those massive pieces of ironware, heated to a near red, is to keep them moving constantly. By the time my nose had in—

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I was interested when they told me that the Nome Band was holding weekly rehearsals. It led the Memorial Day parade in 1907.





I took King Lobo's in-
ert form to Ketchikan.

THE supper dishes at my White River Camp—such as they were—were washed and dried and now they lay upon my rude table ready for the next morning's breakfast.

I hung the dish towel up over the stove in a place where it would dry and, pulling off my boots, began to prepare for bed. It was still early in the evening and a bit too early, perhaps, to retire, but I was dog-tired. I had traveled far during the day, much of the time through deep snow, and the weariness that comes when one has been out in the cold all day, and then enters a place where it is warm and dry, weighed heavily upon me.

Inside my tent, it was hot. The heat waves, rising from the top of the red-hot stove, caused the candle flame to waver and flicker. The candles began to smoke and I blew them out. In the darkness I sat beside the stove, basking in its warmth in satiable pleasure.

Outside it was cold. Gosh! I thought to myself, it hardly seems like April. The only sign of spring that I had seen for months was that which I had seen today; great wedge-shaped formations flying to the north, high over my head—geese on their migratorial flight to nesting grounds. There had been the occasional hoot of the blue grouse, too, but all else remained as it had been all winter.

The snow lay deep in the forest, almost as deep as it had lain in January. Where I had been during the day, on the ridges far back of the place where I was camped, the snow was even deeper. Down toward the sea, spring was in the awakening; but, where I was, almost at the head of a long fjord that reached far back into the mountains, on Revillagigedo Island in South-eastern Alaska, spring was indeed slow in coming.

As I sat, pondering over the lateness of the season, increasing weariness swept over me like an onrushing tide. Almost too tired to sleep, I sat and reviewed the events of the day as they came, chain like, before my sleep-crowded brain.

I thought of the wolf traps I had set 'way back in the timber. For almost three weeks they had lain there without a sign of a wolf in the country. Early that morning when I left camp, I had meant to pull every trap and set them down in lower levels, where travel was better and I could tend them easier. My early morning decision had been quickly altered, however, for later I had seen sign. Huge wolf tracks; they appeared the size of saucers in the snow. This sign meant that the wolves had come back to the White River country on George Inlet.

An approaching snowstorm had threatened me while I traveled in the mountains, and I had covered the line in haste,



Wolf packs continually raid deer in the almost jungle-like growths of

Some Wolves Get

but making sure, first, that every trap was in working condition. Tonight I wondered what my luck would be. Would the snow that fell be wet and heavy enough, in the event of a freeze after the storm, to put my traps out of commission, or would it be light and dry and cover my tracks and obliterate any sign that I had made around the sets? A light snow would aid my purpose, I knew, but a freeze would be a severe set-back. Wolf hunting and trapping is an exceedingly ticklish business and, now, since a pack was in my part of the country, I didn't want to make any mistakes if I could avoid them.

Assurance that I stood a good chance to make a catch, then doubt, assailed my tired thoughts. These conflicting factors are

To avoid being hung up by chain and drag, the wolf had taken to the beach. Some deer escape by taking to the water and swim





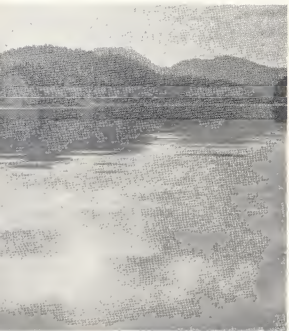
Above photo from U. S. Forest Service. Others by Lawrence Carson.
brush and timber of Southeastern Alaska's mountains and valleys.

Away By Lawrence Carson

what make wolfing the sport it is. It is so intriguing that I have come to consider wolfing more interesting than all other forms of the chase. The wolves have such a tremendous breadth of country to range in! And to augment the uncertainty of making a kill or a catch when they did come to my district was the chance that they would discover that I was in the neighborhood and leave without my getting a chance at them. A wolf's suspicions are very easily aroused.

With such thoughts before me, I must have fallen asleep and slept for some time. When I awoke, the fire was out and the tent was cold. I still sat on the edge of my bunk, where I had gone off to sleep. I felt cramped and cold, but this was not the

ing across the inlet. This one did so near my camp.



The huge fellow had resorted to almost every means to rid his foot of the trap and had dragged it along for many miles.

reason for my awakening. I had heard a sound. For a moment I thought I had been dreaming, but the sound came again. I straightened from my resting place and listened. The cry came sardonically and weird through the night air.

Ominous and bloodcurdling, the sound seemed, violating the peace of the brooding mountains and the silent valleys where all things should have been asleep. The rocky walls of the valleys reflected the sounds until it seemed that something out of the supernatural had come to visit the earth, rather than something that was alive and breathing. It was the hunting cry of the wolf pack that came to my cars.

My heart beat faster and my blood raced; all the weariness of the day was forgotten. I moved to the tent flaps and threw them wide open in order that every sound might be unobstructed. The calls had come from high in the mountain country where I had hiked during the day. But now, everything was silent. The silence of my camp was even greater; an awful silence it was, brooding and forbidding.

As I stood, it was several seconds before the singular beauty of the night attracted my attention. In front, and to the left of my camp, the stream moved by like a silent, silver strand. The storm of the day before had passed, and now a full moon cast its radiance over the tree tops with a great, soft light. Not a cloud was in the sky.

Back under the trees it was dark, but here and there fingers of moonlight pierced the gloom and came to rest on the snowy-white blanket that lay beneath. My boat, tied by a long line, lay like a sleeping thing on the breast of the stream. It was the only link from my wild environment to the outside world where was the thing I knew as civilization. In the moonlight, how fragile and frail that link seemed! The loneliness and emptiness of my situation smote me as it never had before. How strong

I knew what I would find: deer hair and crushed bones, rent tissues and blood.



and primitive was the immense country! An urge was born that made me feel like crying out in the night to the wolf pack; a primitive urge that comes to man on such nights as this when he is alone.

The ethereal pandemonium of sounds came intermittently from the mountainside and up the valley. The pack had split and were now on the drive, coming closer to my camp.

Mentally, I pictured the deer, victim of the chase, plunging through the snow in wild flight before the onslaught of the pack.

I cursed the deer for their foolishness. Why in the world didn't they stay closer to the beach where they could take refuge by swimming across the waters of the inlet to escape their pursuers? Why did they have to stay back in the deep snow? Surely there must have been some warning that the pack would soon be upon them.

While these thoughts ran through my mind, a howl came from a thicket

changeable to a surprising degree in Southeastern Alaska. A full moon during the night—an early fall of snow in the morning, and now—the sun was shining!

The sun was warm, too. Already the spruce trees surrounding my camp were unburdening themselves of snow. In heavy drops, from branches overhead, snow "plopped" upon the fly that covered my tent. I dressed in a hurry and soon had the drum-stove glowing again. My breakfast that morning was a hurried one. I wanted to be on my way as soon as possible.

The fresh snow would obliterate, to a certain degree, the tracks that the wolf pack had made the night before, but even so, there would be sign left if I could get going before the warm rays of the sun could melt them altogether.

First, I would go to the thicket where I had heard the wolves pull down the deer the night before. It was just a short distance from camp, so I

into plain sight. They stopped and stood still, watching my aquatic maneuvers in the stream.

Caught completely off-guard, I sought a place of concealment. Such an act on my part was utter foolishness. . . . I might have known that there was none.

The seconds flashed by with remarkable rapidity. It finally dawned on me that if I was going to do any shooting I had better do it from where I was standing and get it over with, else my spectators would vanish into the forest as rapidly as they had appeared.

The wolves now stood motionless, seemingly interested in learning what kind of a creature I was, splashing around in the stream there before them. Two of the animals were gray. The other was as black as ebony.

It was the black one that I concentrated on. The gold bead of the front rifle sight came to rest on his black chest. I squeezed the trigger. The



Photo by Milotte Studio.

There are many beautiful spots such as this one near my camp on George Inlet. I often see deer come down to the water.

close to camp. Startlingly close it was—a call indicating that the quarry was down. I had heard it many times before. I knew that another deer had come to its end. I knew what I would find in the morning when I went to the place—a red blot on the snow, deer hair and crushed bones, rent tissue, blood stains.

The drama over, I relaxed and reviewed the situation. The wolf pack had come from the country where my traps were set. Maybe—I thought—maybe some of my traps had registered. In the morning I would take stock. I took off my clothes and rolled into bed and was soon fast asleep.

The raucous cry of a raven awakened me. I threw back the flap of my sleeping bag and gazed out through the opening in the tent upon a world that was glistening white. Sometime, during the early hours of the morning, spring snow had fallen. Weather is

left my pack behind. Without donning either hat or coat, but carrying my rifle, I started out.

I traveled down the river toward a spot where, I thought, I could ford the stream. I moved along carelessly, making no attempt to approach the kill quietly.

I arrived at the place where I was to cross the stream in order to get to the thicket beyond and, after pulling my rubber boots up as high as they would go, began feeling for substantial footing in the water. It was deeper than I expected. I kept splashing around trying to find a shallow place. Once, in the midst of my stumbling and splashing, I happened to look up. A movement on the far side of the stream had caught my eye.

The most incredible of the incredible happened! Not more than one hundred and fifty yards from where I stood, three wolves suddenly came

30-'06 cracked like a giant whip. I saw my quarry fall.

The wolves had been standing on a ledge of rock bordering a small creek. This creek flowed into the stream I was crossing, a short distance from where I stood. The animal had fallen from the ledge into a small pool that lay below.

The pool was so surrounded with boulders and rocks that it was impossible to get another shot at the wolf. The wounded animal kept thrashing around in the pool, throwing geysers of water as if some giant fish was imprisoned there. The chance of another shot was useless. I started wading across the stream.

Over my boot tops I went, but this made little difference until my boots became so full of water that they, with the aid of the current in mid-stream, almost washed my footing

—Please turn to page 22

From Ketchikan To Barrow

On this page are related facts in regard to Alaska's animals, fish and birds, her scenery, natural wonders and other items of current and general interest. Items such as these, from all parts of Alaska, will be presented each month.



At Lake Creek, near Anchorage recently, Tony Craviolini hooked a trout. As he reeled it in, a hair seal clamped his teeth into the trout and became caught on the hook. There was a terrific struggle. The seal finally broke away, leaving a part of his lip on the hook and the deep marks of his teeth on the trout.

The Tongass National Forest in Southeastern Alaska comprises over ten per cent of all U. S. National Forest lands.

Preliminary to making a clean-up on his dredging operation at Moose Creek, in the Bonnifield district, W. E. Pringle used a pitchfork to throw some of the larger rocks out of the sluice boxes. He was about to throw a fork-full of stones aside when he noticed that the gleam of one was a little different than the rest. It contained ten ounces—\$350 dollars worth—of gold.

A sample of extremely high-test oil, said to be more than 52 per cent gasoline as it comes from the ground, was brought to Anchorage in July from the 8,100-foot hole being driven by the Iniskin Drilling Company at Chinitna.

Three old flasks, of a type not in use for nearly forty years, containing a total of five pounds of gold, were found near Juneau recently by two men near the Glacier Highway. The flasks were discovered on digging in the ground when a pick broke one of the flasks, spilling the contents. The gold was taken to the U. S. Commissioner and shipped to the U. S. Assay Office for the men, whose identities were not disclosed.

The name "hootch" for a form of distilled liquor is said to have originated when a discharged soldier named Doyle taught the Indians at Hootznahoo, Southeastern Alaska, the art of distilling it during the military occupation of Alaska shortly after the Territory was purchased from the Russians.

Navigators traversing the inside passage in the water-filled canyons between Seattle and Skagway often calculate their distance from shore by means of

the echo from the steamer's whistle in foggy weather or on dark nights, sometimes traveling almost entirely by such means. Since sound travels through the air at a rate of about 1080 feet a second, an echo returning to the ship after one second indicates that land is about 540 feet away.

Eskimos in the Arctic marveled at white men swimming during the Gold Rush days, apparently at that time having no knowledge of swimming themselves. Later, however, some Eskimos learned to swim.

Fifty degrees below zero in Whitehorse, Yukon Territory, is said to be more pleasant than ten below in Skagway due to the fact that in Skagway the atmosphere is damp, whereas in Whitehorse "it is so dry that you can freeze an ear off without knowing it."

The marvelously preserved remains of a prehistoric muskox were found by University of Alaska personnel engaged in collecting skeletal specimens uncovered from perpetually-frozen ground during dredging operations on

Little Eldorado Creek near Chatanika. Skin and hair and the vegetable contents of the alimentary tract were in perfectly identifiable condition.

All King Island Eskimos go to Nome in June, return home in September.

Frank Yasuda, Japanese trader at Beaver, who came to Alaska in 1890, is known as the "Santa Claus of Beaver." Known and liked all over Alaska, he made several staves, is reputed to have given most of it away to friends during hard winters.

Due to the ten-million-dollar naval development being made near Kodiak, that city is experiencing much business activity and there is an air of optimism among the people of the old Alaska town. A Chamber of Commerce was recently organized.

A study of the immense peat deposits in Alaska is being made by Dr. A. D. Stokes of Washington, D. C. The United States imports two million tons of peat annually from abroad at a wholesale price of about \$15.00 a ton.

M. D. Snodgrass, an active farmer in the Matanuska Valley for the past twenty years, retired recently due to ill health, on doctor's orders. He turned over his farm to others to operate.

Frank Leach, owner of Circle Hot Springs, where he has lived for 35 years, says the best way to combat the Alaska mosquito is to encourage swallows. Leach estimates that there are one thousand swallows' nests in the vicinity of the Springs and that the birds devour sixteen million mosquitoes a day.

A trip on which he planned to visit every wildlife agent in Western and Interior Alaska was being made by Frank Dufresne, executive officer of the Alaska Game Commission, in August.

Among the many visionary schemes to construct railways and telegraph lines over Alaska in the early days was one presented in 1897 by Count Leiq de Lobel, a Frenchman residing in Dawson, Yukon Territory, who conceived the idea of a railway from America to Asia by way of Bering Strait.



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Some Wolves Get Away

(Continued from page 20)

from under me. Deeper water lay ahead. I saw that crossing at this point was impossible for anyone not garbed in a diving suit.

I looked across the stream to where my animal lay to make sure it was still there. Then I began to back out of the stream. I felt sure that the wolf would die in the pool in which it was lying.

I reached shore and set out upstream as fast as I could travel to a place where I knew there was a riffle and shallow water. It took me several minutes to reach this place.

Once on the other side, I ran breathlessly back to the point where the wolf had fallen. The slippery rocks retarded me. I slipped and fell and cursed the whole situation. It seemed that I would never reach my objective! When I finally did, I was so out of breath that I could do little or nothing. And the wolf was gone!

Momentary dismay was supplanted by confidence when I saw the place where the wounded animal had crawled out of the stream. Blood was on the rocks. A crimson stain was still visible in the pool of water.

The snow had melted on the edge of the stream, but back in the timber there would be plenty for tracking and, with the aid of the blood trail and the fresh fall of snow, I felt sure that I could trail the animal to the place where it would surely crawl in to die. On my part there was no need to hurry. Let the animal lay until it either stiffened or died. I felt sure that the wolf would not go far.

I knew if I followed too soon, and if the snow was not given time to lie down where it would stiffen and not be able to rise, it would keep going and the chase would be longer. Surely it was hit, but how hard I did not know. From my dry shirt pocket I took tobacco and papers and rolled myself a cigarette.

Finishing my smoke, I plunged into the timber. The trail was easy to follow. Back of every log, over and around, where the trail led, I expected to find my wolf. I moved carefully, rifle ready. I stopped from time to time and peered through the thick undergrowth, but always the trail led ahead. I found a place where the wolf had stopped. Blood was on the snow, but not as much as I expected.

UNCERTAINTY began to creep over me, and with the uncertainty came doubt. Perhaps my quarry was not wounded as badly as I thought. From previous experience with South-eastern Alaska wolves, I knew that they had the stamina and vitality of gladiators. Unless the bullet had hit a vital spot, I stood a good chance of being on the losing side.

I quickly surveyed the ground around me. I saw that I had almost walked in a circle in trailing the animal. Now it dawned on me that the place where the wolf had stopped, momentarily, had been its resting place.

From this spot the wolf had heard me enter the brush and had deliberately led me around in a circle to throw me off its trail.

The trail ahead indicated that the animal was heading for the bank of the small stream, almost for the same place where it had entered the timber. I followed as quickly as possible but when I burst through the brush at the edge of the creek the wolf was nowhere in sight.

The trail showed that the animal was traveling faster. Surely in the end it must weaken! I plunged into the creek and crossed. On the other side I found where the wolf had come out and taken to the timber.

The trail of the animal now headed downhill, toward the saltwater beach of the inlet. Once there, it would be completely out of the snow. Hiding places would be numerous.

Now, I could find only a few drops of blood here and there on the fast-dimming trail. I plunged on in wild haste until I came to the heavy fringe of timber that bordered the inlet. Here the snow was gone and all sign of the trail vanished as if it had gone up in thin air.

DISAPPOINTMENT in any form is a terrible thing. But the disappointment that comes when an objective is thought to have been attained, only to find that all is lost, is the blackest disappointment of all. It swept over me. I searched far and wide, but to no avail. My quarry was gone. That is all there was to it.

Wet to the skin, I started back over the trail I had just followed to the beach. The day was beautiful, but I neither saw nor enjoyed it.

I went to the place where I had heard the wolves make the kill the night before. Yes, the remains of a deer carcass were scattered all over the snow.

I heaped abuse upon myself for my lack of foresight. I might have known that the wolves that made the kill would stay fairly close to it; at least some of them. If only I had crossed the riffle earlier in the morning, and had come down the side of the stream that the wolves were on, my luck might have been different. But, how was I to know? It was the unknown factor in the game that had beaten me. At another time it may have been the reverse. Besides, I thought, though I never did, I might find the wounded animal, later. At any rate, I piously promised myself, if ever again such a thing happened, I most certainly would employ different tactics than I had in this case.

Back in camp, wearing dry clothes, and with a boiling-hot cup of coffee under my belt, I felt better. The disappointment of my loss was still keen whenever I reflected on it, but to offset this, I thought of my traps on the mountains and in the valley where I had heard the wolves howl the night before. Maybe my luck there would be different! I shouldered my pack-board and started out.

In a short while I was out of the

The Alaska Sportsman

timber. Following the edges of the open muskies, I soon reached the higher levels where my traps were set. The sun shone out of a blue sky. There was not a cloud in sight.

Nearing the trap, I found signs that two wolves had circled the set the night before. The wily devils! There was small chance of their walking straight into the trap! Too wise for that, they investigated the origin of the strange odor, first. Anyway, I had induced them to approach, and the trap may have registered. I pushed on in haste.

Nothing was in the trap. The animals had made several wide circles, but they had not come close. Something was wrong and discretion had overcome their desire to investigate further. They had taken off down the hill in search of better game.

The rest of the line netted the same results; no wolves were in the traps, but at several there were signs that a close investigation had been made. Anyway, I had them biting; in a few days, if they stayed in the country, their curiosity might be overcome and maybe one would make the fatal mistake of placing its foot in the wrong place.

IN VIEW of the situation, I came to the conclusion that there was either something wrong with my sets or the scent. Maybe the wolves were wise to the scent and I had better change it in favor of something else. The traps themselves were hard to spot. They had been handled carefully with scented gloves and not a sign of either the trap or drag appeared. The traps were all right, but I would use a different scent.

I remembered some potent odoriferous seal oil that my friend, Nels Olson, the winter watchman at a cannery located a few miles down the inlet, had put up the fall before. By now, with the length of age on it, it should be strong enough to back a skunk out of a hole. On the other hand, from past experience I knew that seal oil or seal bait was a poor thing to use above the high water mark. A wolf is smart enough to know a seal does not belong back in the timber unless something has put it there. Most certainly the animal is going to be extra wary. But strong seal oil; the rancidity of it might appeal to a wolf. I decided that I would try it.

The next day I journeyed to the cannery and there I met Nels. "Sure," he answered, "take the whole works; you'll find it in a five-gallon can down under the piling. Since that stuff has been around here even the crows and gulls have shunned the place."

I got the seal oil and it certainly was strong. When I pulled the cover off the can, the odor was enough to make my eyes smart; at least I thought they did, but perhaps it was caused by the revolting sensation in my stomach. Anyway, the stuff was putrid and it was small wonder that the crows and seagulls had looked upon it in disgust.

In the few days that followed, my traps in the mountains lay unmo-

lest. I had added to the watchman's scent, a compound that I purchased from a drug store earlier in the season. The odor that arose from the few drops I placed in the vicinity of my sets was mystifying and unusual even to my nostrils.

The wolves had left the country, but I had reasons to believe that they would come back on their next periodical visit to my valley. These visits had been fairly regular—about once every three weeks. When this period was up, I began to look for their return.

SPRING was farther advanced, now, and the deer were showing in the valley in great numbers. They had come from the hills and were feeding close to the shores of the inlet, where vegetation was green and tender.

I knew it would not be long before the wolves started to raid and, sure enough, one night, like a scourge from out of the mountains, they came!

I stayed fairly close to my camp for the first day or two after the wolves arrived, in order to leave no sign around the places where my traps were set. Then, late one afternoon when I could stand the suspense no longer, I started to go over my trap line.

I skirted the beach of the inlet for a short while. Then I walked up a creek that came tumbling from the mountains. By wading in the water I would leave little or no trail. The creek would lead me by an easy route back into the mountains. I wanted to be back there by evening. Maybe I would get within view of the marauders when they came out for the evening hunt, I thought.

In due time I came to the place of my first set. Wolves had been all around, but none had come into the danger zone. Several of the sets thereafter yielded the same results, but wolf sign was becoming more plentiful.

I had a premonition that there would be some excitement before the day was over. An unexplainable feeling made me almost "call the shot" and, sure enough, when I came to the spot where the next trap had been, I found that it was gone. Drag and all had been yanked from their resting places and carried out through the timber.

I reconnoitered the scene and found that the wolf had circled the set before coming in. The tracks indicated that the animal was a large dog wolf. He had been careful, but the strange aroma that came to his sensitive nose had evidently overcome any thought that he was entering a place that might prove dangerous. He had to investigate—and he did.

In his approach he had stopped several times, but each time the lure had overcome caution and he had approached a little closer. He made the misstep—and whang!—the powerful Number 114 wolf trap snapped into an unrelenting grip, planting its jaws well into the left front foot.

The struggle that followed must

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have been terrific. The ground was badly torn up in his fight to escape from the scene. The steel hook-drag, at the end of the trap chain, caught time and again, only to be torn loose with appalling ease. The strength of the creature was amazing. Trees, as thick as a man's wrist, on which the steel drags caught, were pulled out as if a donkey engine had been at work.

The trail was an easy one to follow. It was almost as if some prehistoric monster had crashed its way through the forest. Somewhere along the line, I knew that the steel hooks, after the animal had tired, would take permanent hold, and there I would find my coveted prize. I pushed on.

I HAVE heard it said by old wolfers with much more experience than I can hope to have, that they believed wolves were so smart that they were capable of counting. One old-timer even went so far as to say that once he knew of a wolf that could do black-smithing—that the animal could hammer a wolf trap off his imprisoned foot with ease. Of these things I know not, but I do know that the wolf I followed through the timber and brush that evening resorted to almost every possible means to rid himself of the trap that retarded him.

Evidently the animal eventually realized that his efforts at escape were causing too much disturbance, for he made straight for the creek that I had followed up from the beach and, hitting it, started traveling downstream where there was no brush or trees to hang up the drag that followed so menacingly behind.

When I came to the creek there was only the sign that the animal had gone downstream. On my way up, I had seen no unusual disturbance of the shores and I began to wonder if again I was going to lose my prize.

Darkness was not far away. I had no desire, as badly as I wanted the prize, to face the trapped animal in the dark. A lone wolf is known as a cowardly animal, but when trapped he can be as vicious as any on four feet and from the power and strength that my trapped animal had displayed thus far, I knew that he was far from spent.

I searched the creek bottom far and wide, but I could not find where he had entered the timber again. There was simply no sign. I began to circle back before I realized that it was too dark and that I would have to give up the chase until the following morning. Reluctantly I left the scene and made my way back to camp in the darkness.

A few days before, I had made a trip to my home down the inlet. When I returned, my wife and our baby daughter and my wife's brother, Harold Snyder, had come to camp with me. Early the following morning I took Harold along to aid in the search for the missing wolf.

In a short time we were back at the place where I had given up the hunt the night before. Spreading out, we began to scour the countryside for the missing trail. We searched in one direction for almost a mile, but not a

sign did we encounter. Then we started to hunt from the creek in the opposite direction. This search ended with the same result. Where in the world could the trapped animal have gone?

Seemingly the wolf had taken to the air; the smooth, rockbound creek bottom gave no solution to the problem. Had the wily fellow outwitted us altogether? I began to think about the wolf that had turned blacksmith, but, even so, somewhere I should find the discarded trap!

The situation began to look almost hopeless. But first, I said, let's start from the beach of the inlet and search along the shore. Somewhere there must be the much-sought trail.

The only possible solution that remained was that the wolf had traveled down the creek and had gained the sanctuary of the beach. If it was so, somewhere he would have to enter the timber again to avoid detection.

We followed the beach in both directions from the place the creek poured its flood out upon the salt water, with no results. Then we began skirting the shoreline of the inlet, staying back in the fringe of timber that bordered the inlet as we searched for the tell-tale track.

EVENTUALLY, close to the creek's mouth, we came across a place where a few broken blueberry bushes lay upon the beach gravel. It was not an important sign, and probably the evidence would have been passed easily had it not been that we were looking for that very thing. A few yards farther, deep gouges in the earth showed where the steel hooks had taken hold momentarily. Then, up over a well-scarred log, the trail again led back into the timber. We had passed the place earlier in the day, but the signs had escaped our notice.

The rest was easy. Up over a small cliff the trail led, and on the other side, hopelessly hung up, we found the infuriated lobo. Even though securely caught, the brute had not given up his losing battle. He had dug a hole into the side of the cliff where there were loose boulders and earth, causing what appeared to have been a miniature landslide. Loose debris was piled on the flat below. Halfway in this hole the wolf lay in hiding. His front foot was hung in such a manner that in order to extricate himself he would have had to make an almost straight leap of several feet up the bank to clear the drag from where it was hooked.

The wolf must have heard us coming, for he now lay as quiet as dead. I thought at first that the animal was spent, but such was not the case.

He realized that we had seen him and, with a rumble in his throat that sounded like thunder, he turned his great head and faced us. Cowardice was not in his fierce glare. Instead, courage that was born from desperation challenged our closer approach. Fangs, like ivory sabres, were bared. Cruel fangs, that had snapped the life from many victims, were flashed men-

acingly in our direction. He challenged closer inspection on our part. It was not wise that we accept the dare, even though the climax of the hunt was at hand.

The sight of us seemed to infuriate the brute. He concentrated his attack upon the chilled steel of the trap in order to be free and at us. The rocks rolled and the dirt flew from the heaves of his mighty muscles as his teeth clamped down, vice like, upon the hard steel of the trap. So great was his heaving and plunging that it was impossible to place a shot in a vital spot. I climbed up to where the drag had caught above the animal's head, and turned it loose.

With a lightning flip, the animal turned over. Feeling the slack in the chain, he leaped from out of his improvised cage and down the slide that his digging had created. The trap and drag, now free, was handled as lightly as a strong man might handle a child's toy. Small wonder that we had trailed the animal so far! When the drag hung

momentarily in places—even places that would have tested the strength of a man in breaking clear—the animal broke loose with amazing ease. Power? There was power a-plenty in those rippling muscles!

The last break was short lived, for the drag again took hold and the escaping animal was brought up short. This was the end. Before the end, I took several photographs of the valiant animal on the beach.

L OBO died as he had lived, in defiance of all things that would dare to conquer him. His bloody career was ended, but even in death his fiery eyes and truculent jaws opened in a look of unremitting hate. Lobo, a king of his domain—and rightly a king he might be called—was dead.

As I looked at his lifeless form, a feeling of condonation came over me. Even though he had been a wanted destroyer of wildlife and ill-deserving of mercy, somehow I felt sorry that he was gone. I wondered if the great

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mountains and the deep, silent valleys that had been his range would miss him. I wondered, if at night, when the moon hung low like a great ball of fire, the dark, shaggy spruce trees would miss his wild, deep-throated call. Something had been taken away that would never be put back in the scheme of things. Somehow, I felt as if there was an irreparable loss. The well-known axiom had again asserted itself; the sport and fun were not in the kill, but in the chase.

That evening we were back to the scene of the kill and loaded Lobo's inert form into the boat to be taken to town where it was deprived of its pelt. The coat, though not prime nor marketable, was in good condition otherwise. His pelt measured seven feet, nine inches in length.

I know, in years to come when I look at his pelt, memories will come of a great mountainous country. Back under the overhanging boughs of heavy spruce, a tent will show in the evening light. The only sound will be the rhythmic night wind as it mingles with the hushed trickle of a stream as it sweeps on its way to join the waters of a deep, blue inlet. A silver moon will hang low over an immensity of broken crags and peaks towering high into the heavens. I will see the glitter of frost on a blanket of ermine-like snow and, while in quiet reminiscent thought, the hunting cry of the Lobos, wild and fierce, will come to my ears again.

Lawrence Carson, author of the foregoing story, is now engaged in predatory animal control for the U. S. Forest Service in the Southern Division of the Tongass National Forest. The pelt of the large wolf is on display at the office of The Alaska Sportsman.

Clear the Land and Crops Will Grow!

(Continued from page 11)

between Cook Inlet and the Kenai Mountains, comprises some of the best agricultural land in Alaska. The climate is mild and even, and the successful crops would be about the same as for the Matanuska Valley. Transportation facilities have not yet been developed extensively to this area, but it is expected that the population

will increase rapidly with the advent of roads connecting it with The Alaska Railroad.

Southwestern Alaska, including the Kodiak-Afognak Island group, the treeless Alaska Peninsula, and the Aleutian Islands as far as Attu, offer a fine grazing land for cattle. Grass grows luxuriantly, and the mild climate allows the cattle to forage for themselves most of the year. Efforts to raise beef commercially in the regions west of Kodiak have generally proved a failure, due to lack of regular transportation, but better transportation facilities there are now assured. Kodiak has a steamer on an average of once a week.

Some loss has been reported on the Island in the past by stockmen, who say that the large brown bears take a toll of the herds, especially in the spring before natural feed becomes abundant. All in all, one can expect beef cattle raising to be a profitable venture in the Kodiak-Afognak group in the future.

Southeastern Alaska is a non-agricultural region for the most part, as the rugged nature of the mountainous landscape, together with the prohibitive cost of clearing the land of the heavy forest growth, preclude economical farming. There are a few truck gardens in the vicinity of the larger cities, and a few ranchers operate successfully on what bottom land is available along the mouths of the larger rivers of the mainland.

LAND or property outside of incorporated towns is at present not subject to taxation, although all male settlers between the ages of 21 and fifty years are required to pay an annual school tax of five dollars.

The cost of living in Alaska, in general, is much the same as in the States, with a surplus of labor for what jobs are available. The settler will find, though, that employers hire local help whenever the settler has the necessary qualifications. The wage scale an hour for common labor in one of the large mining operations in the Interior runs from 71 cents an hour, with board and room, to 86 cents an hour without.

At the present time there is very little livestock for sale in the farming



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communities, and it is advisable for the prospective settler to bring his own dairy cows and horses with him. Cattle must be inspected for tuberculosis and horses for glanders before being placed aboard ship at Seattle. Cars carrying livestock in Alaska should be provided with water barrels so that the animals can be watered en route.

Information as to homeseekers' rates and passenger rates from Seattle to points in Alaska can be had by applying to the General Manager, The Alaska Railroad, 333 North Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.

Lumber mills will be found in operation in most of the sizeable communities, and wood, for fuel and domestic purposes, can usually be found in sufficient quantity on the farm-

will be able to realize a market crop sooner than when starting on new ground.

On the other hand, many will wish to take advantage of homestead privileges and build up their own enterprise from the start. Such lands are still available, and can yet be had where one can move his truck, household goods and farm machinery, by road.

The homestead requirements are: first, that the land desired shall be of an agricultural nature; second, that the person taking up a homestead must be a citizen of the United States, or have declared intention of citizenship; third, that the homesteader must establish residence within six months of taking up the homestead, and must continue it for at least seven months



Photo from U. S. Forest Service.

Farms like this one at Ketchikan have been established in Southeastern Alaska.

stead. If the property is on cutover land, the wood may be obtained from the public domain. Coal is imported into Southeastern Alaska from Washington, but in Southwestern Alaska and in the Interior, local coal of good quality can be secured at very reasonable rates.

Naturally, the prospective settler will wish to locate in a community that is near enough to a profitable market to allow ready sale for his products. Also, such a location will provide schools, churches, and the community enterprise that is necessary for a well-rounded social life.

In some communities, there are farms and cleared lands for sale. If the settler should wish to purchase such property, he will be spared the labor and expense of clearing the land, and

out of each year for three years.

Further, one-sixteenth of the area included in the homestead must be cultivated within the first two years, and that area must be increased to one-eighth before the end of three years. A habitable house must be erected on the land, and proof of compliance with regulations must be furnished at the end of five years from date of entry.

The size of the homestead is not more than a quarter-section, or 160 acres. The average cost of taking up the homestead, for fees, commissions, and advertising costs, will probably be about \$40. The district land offices in Alaska are located at Fairbanks, Anchorage, and Nome, and the settler may secure information by addressing these offices. He should ask for Circular No. 491, entitled: "Information,

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The Alaska Sportsman
Ketchikan, Alaska

laws, and regulations relating to public lands in the Territory of Alaska."

A homesteader entering on unsurveyed land should make entry at the proper land office within three months of his settling on the property, and have the boundaries and corners of his claim marked according to regulations. On surveyed land, a plat of survey should be submitted with final proof of compliance; and on unsurveyed land, an application for survey should be filed with the proof of compliance. There is no charge for the survey, which will be performed during the next survey season, but if a settler wishes his survey sooner, he may hire it done privately at his own expense.

There are two large National Forests in Alaska, the Tongass National Forest in Southeastern Alaska, and the Chugach National Forest on the north shore of the Gulf of Alaska, between the coast and the Alaska Range.

Various forms of leases and permits for use of forest land as homesteads, fur farms, water power projects, rights of way, and logging operations have been arranged for by the Forest Service.

All ports in Alaska east of Unimak Pass and the Bering Sea are open to navigation the year around. Mail steamers come at least once a week from Seattle to all Alaska points as far west as Seward. From Seward, mail is carried to the Interior by rail, and to more distant points, by plane or occasionally by dog team.

There are roads of some extent around nearly every town in Alaska, and the number of automobiles in these towns will surprise the newcomer. Unless one's car has a relatively high value, though, it will not pay to transport it to Alaska. He will do better to sell it in the States and purchase a new or used car in the community in which he settles.

Because of the considerable distances separating centers of population in Alaska, the airplane is becoming more and more a common means of travel. Long ago accepted by the public, and especially miners and others in remote districts, the airplane has proved itself to be oftentimes the cheapest mode of travel when loads are light, distances great, and time valuable.

All the larger cities in Alaska have electric light, telephone, and good water supply and sewage systems. There are two broadcasting stations in Southeastern Alaska, one in Anchorage, and another to be installed at Fairbanks. Communication with the States is modern and fast, via the United States Army Signal Corps, with its network of cable and radio equipment.

Alaska is modern now, and growing more so, and the new settler will find it a far cry from that found by the Gold Rush prospectors of '98.

I'll Get Old Club-Foot Yet!

(Continued from page 9)

After I've looked over the traps and checked everything to see that it is in readiness, I start for the nearest cabin

on the line. There, and at each successive cabin, I repeat the cleaning up process initiated at the base camp. The clean up and the cutting of the winter wood supply takes about a week for each cabin, so by the time I have made the circuit, it is time to start out with the traps and to cruise the country to locate the runs and trails.

During the trapping season, I am on the go almost constantly, as I mentioned before, except for my one-day-a-week layovers at the base cabin.

On the trail, though, I stop occasionally to rest my two faithful dogs, Pinky and Spot, or to snap a picture. It seems that no matter what the weather or how bad the trail, even though lightening my load by ounces might be necessary, my camera is al-



Photo by J. Watson Webb, Jr.

When the young sheep's mother was not looking, the eagle swooped down.

ways the last thing rejected from the pack.

Not only once, but several times have I had to nurse frostbitten fingers for a week because I tried to manipulate a camera barehanded in temperatures of from thirty-five to forty degrees below zero. In trying to get pictures of trail experiences and unusual happenings, I have found that all too often a perfect setting joins forces with poor light conditions to make difficult the taking of a good photograph.

And, speaking of photographs recalls to my mind many scenes which I remember vividly, but which I was unable to photograph for one reason or another.

One of these incidents had to do with an eagle, a ewe mountain sheep, and a lamb. I first noticed a very large eagle up among some craggy peaks a good half-mile away, and after looking at him for a few moments, I noticed that he seemed to be watching something.

I waited patiently for a half hour or so before I finally spotted this ewe with a small lamb that she was trying to hide from the eagle. After a

while, as it was getting late, the ewe evidently considered it safe to go out in search of food, so she left her lamb under cover.

After possibly twenty minutes, the lamb ventured out to see where its mother was, and the eagle, which was perched above, watched it get away from the rock cover. When the lamb neared the edge of a cliff, the bird made a swoop like a pursuit plane in a power dive, struck the lamb with its closed talon, and knocked it over the cliff to the ground some two hundred feet below—and all in the twinkling of an eye. Then the eagle swooped down and seized the lamb in its great claws and flew away with it to the accompaniment of frantic and terrified bleats from the bereaved mother.

Another incident of my trap line deals with wolves—and especially one which I call Old Club-Foot.

During the winter of 1937-38 the fur sign was none too plentiful, but the rabbits had been on the increase for a short while near Glacier Point, a place on the Matanuska River where three other streams come together at one place to form a cross. Such a spot is a perfect setting for a cabin, from the trapper's point-of-view, for the game trails from all directions cross the stream at that point, and radiate from it like spokes from the hub of a wheel.

It was late in February and the weather had turned warm, causing the river to run on top of the ice, and the snow to soften, thus making travel miserable. I decided that that would be the last trip of the year, so I sprung each of my traps and cleaned up the line for the close of the season. I approached Glacier Point, crossing down an eight-mile box canyon, and in one place I had to hand-line my dogs and sled down a twenty-five foot cliff.

In the bottom of the canyon I found the tracks of Old Club-Foot and saw that he had taken to travelling on the ice because the softening snow would not readily support his weight on the three good legs he had left after leaving a foot in one of my traps a few years before. I saw that he had swerved from his path in one place and barely missed a snare I had set on the trail, but my most interesting discovery was that he had a mate travelling with him.

The tracks were about two days old, but I could see that the mate had a center toe missing from a hind foot. That marked her as a super-cunning animal and anything but a stranger to my trap line. Once a wolf has been caught in a trap, and subsequently escapes, he possesses an uncanny sense for finding and springing the traps without harm to himself.

AFTER tracking the pair for a ways, I swung up the left bank into camp three-quarters of a mile from the hub, just as a wet snow began to fall. This snow raised my hope of tracking the wolves, for at the hub in the fork of the creeks I had a veritable barricade of traps and snares,

and had some sets baited with eagle.

I expected that the wolves would find at least one of these traps to their liking, but when I visited the first bait-set, I found only the foot of the eagle in the trap. I had been tricked again, but went on across the fork to a set where I had caught two coyotes previously. I found another coyote in this set, and as I looked and fifty yards away across the stream that made my heart almost stop beating!

It was Old Club-Foot—and apparently in a trap!

I started to pick up my .30-'06, but decided that since he was in a trap, I would need only my .22 to kill him, so I left the big gun on the sled and began picking my way across the channel towards my supposed catch. You can imagine my surprise, not to mention language, when I found that the wolf was not in a trap at all, but just standing there looking at me! He

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began to run, of course, and there I was—with nothing but a .22 in my hands!

For ten years I had hunted and trapped in those hills and had always taken the precaution to have a shooting iron at hand ready for use in case of necessity; and when my first real immediate need came for it, I had deliberately left it on the sled! I don't know what I was thinking of, and am still plenty "burnt up", for a predator like that can kill a large amount of game in a year.

IN ANOTHER canyon farther along the line I found mute evidence of the killer's destructive powers, for I came across the carcass of a freshly killed sheep. The tracks showed that the wolf and his mate were travelling together, and although they had consumed practically all of a 125-pound sheep, I found where they had killed and eaten one of their own relatives—a coyote—that had been caught in a trap a short distance beyond.

I salvaged enough of the hide and foreleg of the coyote to collect the bounty, and after hanging around the spot for two days, I did get the revenge of catching Old Club-Foot's mate in a trap. The old wolf himself was too wise and disappeared into the unknown, but his mate furnished a beautiful, dark-bluish colored pelt.

When the trapping season is over

for the year, I take up all my traps and store in the cache all the supplies that I have left over. Then I bundle up my furs and tie them on the sled with my camping equipment and set out for home, as I make that trip by land over the snow and ice, though I fly in in the fall to save time.

When the plane left me at the trap line for my second season, I didn't see another plane all winter, but now it is not uncommon to hear a plane fly over nearly every day. Thanks to modern methods, increased safety, and expanding business, one doesn't feel so all alone any more. Even though you are not bothered by neighbors, it is a nice feeling to know that there is a plane available for emergencies just over the horizon.

My principal hope is that I will be able to get another chance at Old Club-Foot before he dies of old age or falls victim of some other trapper's cleverness. I have tried to get him so long that it will be a great reward to me to have his pelt hanging on my wall. Yes, after another summer with the Road Commission, I'll be back there looking for him!

Confessions of a Fish Pirate

(Continued from page 15)

into the net and never touch the logs. That's okeh, isn't it?"

"Yes, but how are you going to brail fish through the web—you have to raise the trap and you can't raise a pile trap at low water."

He hesitated a moment, then grinned again. "Suppose there was a big hole in the net—we could make a hole, couldn't we?"

"Cut'er?" I exclaimed.

"Why not? The season will be over in two days and we won't be back in this country until next year—can't lose a thing."

"Cut'er, then," I said.

We came alongside the trap. Our boom waved back and forth like a sapling swaying in a windstorm, for we were in the trough of the sea.

As the Skipper maneuvered closer, I reached out with the pike pole and gathered in a fold of the trap net. Berry lashed it fast to the bulwarks, then I gathered in another fold and we repeated the process.

Soon we had the net well in our grasp and the Skipper turned the bow out and put a strain on the net. I took a skinning knife and slashed the net sideways, making enough room for the skiff to go into the spiller.

Berry and I pushed our skiff off the boat, rowed into the trap, and began lifting the net.

The wind howled and the waves, splashing on the trap logs, drowned any noise we made. We worked freely while the trap watchmen slept in their cabin.

We lifted the trap and in half an hour the salmon were laying alongside the Gray Cloud in the bunt.

We brailled like madmen—the boom swung over from the fish to our hold like a pendulum on a clock—regularly and with speed. When the bunt was



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The Alaska Sportsman

Ketchikan, Alaska

clean we had a load of fish. We dropped the mangled webbing and we waded down into the Straits.

The tide was running against the wind, and the sea worked up a fury as the Gray Cloud struggled with her load. "Woolies" burst across the waters and almost heeled us over a couple of times.

The Skipper kept eyeing the weather through the darkness the best he could. Finally he said, "We had better sneak into a cove and anchor up for the night. The weather doesn't look good."

I agreed with him. By this time the engine of the Gray Cloud was straining. I could hear her cough occasionally when we got a tough smash broadside. We agreed to go to a little cove that we knew was sheltered.

An hour later, after a struggle for

ical was fate, that the outcome of our adventure could be classed as both comedy and tragedy.

We reached Ketchikan and found the canneries flooded with fish. The storm was driving the salmon in from the sea and filling traps and seiners' nets, with the result that we found many seiners waiting at every cannery. We had no contract with any cannery. They were not forced to buy our fish, so we found no sale.

Time was short. If we didn't sell soon it would be too late to pack them and we would have to "peugh" the salmon overboard and lose five hundred dollars.

There were two canneries in town we had not covered. We took the fish to the nearest one and received the same answer as at all the others. As we started to draw away from the dock,



Photo by Schallerer's Photo Shop.

The storm had driven the salmon in from the sea and filled traps and seiners' nets, with the result that we found many seiners waiting at every cannery.

the Skipper, a strain on the boat, and dangerous work for the crew, we entered Red Bay, off the Straits. We went through a pass that was mountainous on both sides and where the depth of water was just enough for us to go through.

THE moment we passed the mountains, we found shelter. The wind died and the bay we entered was as calm as a lake on a sunny day. With the calm came human relief. The frowns on our faces became smiles of cheer as we dropped the hook to take a rest.

Twice the next day we poked our bow into the Straits, but to no avail. We couldn't get out of the bay. The storm still raged without. It was the second morning before it subsided. Then we bid farewell to our haven of retreat and started toward town to sell our fish.

We would have lingered longer, but our fish were growing old and the law allows only forty-eight hours between the time they are caught and the time they are canned. After that, they must be dumped. Time was growing short—thirty hours had already passed and it would take us ten hours to get to town. But ill-luck trailed us. So iron-

the fish buyer yelled down to us, "Take them to Diamond X cannery—their trap was washed out in the storm and they are trying to buy fish all over the country."

The Skipper nodded his thanks and I saw him take a deep gulp. Diamond X Cannery was the only one we had not visited.

"Diamond X Cannery! Ye Gads and little fishes! We stole the fish from Diamond X—now they are our last chance for us to sell!"

The Gray Cloud pulled down the channel and around the bend from Ketchikan. The white buildings of the Diamond X Cannery loomed in sight. The Skipper cut his engine to half speed. It seemed to signify his reluctance to go there.

"The fish are getting old," I said. "Full speed ahead!"

He jammed the throttle ahead and the Gray Cloud cut the waters nicely. With the aid of the added fuel she seemed to dance ahead and hurry to her destination.

We tied up at Diamond X. The Skipper jumped on the dock and found the Superintendent before we had the lines fast. I saw them talk seriously together a moment—then the "Sup" came over to the boat. We took off

the hatches and he jumped down the hold into the fish. He "peughed" a few salmon around, inspected them closely, and finally grunted, "Your fish are still solid—I'll buy them!"

Well, the Diamond X Cannery gave us a fat check—four hundred and eighty dollars for fish that already belonged to them. But the same trap from which we took the fish was washed out to sea in the storm after we left. If we had not taken the fish, they would have been lost. The cannery could not have canned the seven thousand fish they bought from us and we would not have received any money from them. Maybe the owners would have been glad even if they knew we pirated those fish—even had they known that they were already **THEIR SALMON!**

Nome Was Like That

(Continued from page 17)

formed me that I was in trouble, the iron had scorched the delicate garment beyond repair. It took nearly my whole week's wages to pay for the damage and when the next rush of work came they neglected to call me.

The weeks between then and Christmas were long ones and I had to draw in my belt several times. Only the kindness of my Swedish laundryman friend saved me from starvation. He gave me bills to collect on commission; bills that he could just as well have collected himself. He seemed to realize that I would not take charity, although the work he gave me was really a form of it. I never spent a more blue Christmas—before or since.

ATTER the first of the year, things began to look a little better. Some of the miners with whom I had played pool and poker sensed that I was having a pretty hard time of it and a couple of them asked me to go out to the creeks with them and do their cooking.

It was a monotonous life, but it at least provided food and shelter. The boys worked all day down in the hot mud made by the steam drills with which they thawed out the frozen ground, then came up into a temperature of about 50 below zero. They were dead tired at night. There was little conversation and only an occasional game of pitch or frog solo.

We would get tired of looking at each other. One of the fellows had a St. Louis newspaper sent him. They would come in big bundles. I read every word, advertisements and all.

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Guess that is why, ever since, I have been a St. Louis ball fan although I have never set foot in that city.

I'll never forget one week when—provisions running low—the boys decided to go into town and stock up. I made out a list and they left, intending to come back the following day.

That night a tremendous blizzard came up. It was a week before the boys could get back to the claim. I was down to canned beans and hardtack when they finally arrived. I have never since cared for canned beans.

When I attended college, I had done some correspondence for one of the city dailies and one summer had worked as a cub on an afternoon sheet. I had told the boys about my experience as a newspaper man. One of them had been talking with Stevens, editor and proprietor of the Nome Goldigger, more familiarly known as "Big Mitt" Stevens.

Stevens was an unusual character. He was more than six feet tall, but with narrow shoulders and long spindly legs. He had a paunch that caused him to appear as though he had swallowed a good-sized watermelon.

I do not know where Stevens came from. There was a rumor around Nome, circulated by those who did not like him, that he had been with Soapy Smith's gang down at Skagway. I rather doubt this, although, from my experience with him, I found him not to be overburdened with scruples and his idea of newspaper ethics was well illustrated by his nickname, "Big Mitt."

There were three newspapers in Nome at that time the Goldigger, the Nome Nugget, and a labor paper controlled by the Industrial Workers of the World. The Goldigger and Nugget were dailies while the labor paper—I cannot recall whether it was called the News or Record—was issued three times a week. Later the Goldigger put out a Sunday edition, with the help of a lot of outside "boiler plate," for one summer.

The Nugget was, of course, the deadly rival of the Goldigger. The editors pulled no punches. The Nugget was owned by a couple of Australian Irishmen, McGrath, I believe, was their last name and I think they were brothers. Anyhow, I know one of them, the editor, was named McGrath and he was red headed, at that.

I do not remember much about the labor paper. It took pot shots at everyone, but the two dailies largely ignored it.

When I came to Nome I had brought

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along my cornet. I was not then a very good cornet player. I was out of practice. At the university, when the call went out for candidates for the college band, out of twenty men, twelve were cornet players. So the leader arbitrarily assigned the larger brass instruments to a group of us would-be cornet virtuosos. I drew a tuba. I played that during the remainder of my college career. A tuba with its enormous mouthpiece is not very conducive to a cornet lip. Out at the creeks, however, I had a good opportunity to practice the cornet while the boys were down in the mine.

Therefore, when the boys told me that Steve might have a job for me, later on, and that the Nome Band was holding weekly rehearsals, I decided to return to town.

I did pick up a few playing jobs with Billy Draper, an old time piano player—the kind who whangs away with a cigarette stuck on his lip.

I beat a seat today that I received on a trip to one of our musical engagements. Billy had a job playing for a dance at the Bessie Roadhouse, about four miles from Nome. One of the girls from the Stockade had a birthday anniversary and she decided to celebrate it at the roadhouse which she had rented for the occasion.

THERE were several better cornet players in Nome than me, but they happened to be busy, so Billy gave me a chance. We went out with his dog team. He bundled me up in the sled with my cornet case, music rack, and a small keg of beer that Billy was taking out.

We had passed the laundry and were going around the small hill on the other side when suddenly the sled swerved and tipped over. I was unable to protect myself because of the robes in which I was encased. I rolled halfway down the hill.

I got up and helped Billy right the sled and pick up the cornet and the keg which had chased me down the slope.

When we started again, Billy, who rode the runners, would take an occasional peek at my nose which was exposed to a temperature of better than forty below. He told me that my face was covered with blood. I did not feel any pain at all, but when we arrived at the roadhouse and the heat began to get in its work, I found that my cheek was swollen and bruised and I had a deep cut on my cheekbone.

I tried to play, but my lip was puffed up so badly that I could not emit a note. Billy had to play the job all alone. It lasted two days and nights and he was a mighty tired musician when it was over. One gal made him play a ballad about a maiden who was left waiting on the seashore by a wandering sailor, for three hours straight. We all got pretty sick of the piece, but Billy was getting a hefty tip every few minutes, so he managed to stand up under the strain.

I did not do so badly, though I could not play. The girls felt sorry for me and slipped several goldpieces on the plate which Billy passed around for

me. One girl even put a ten-dollar slug down my neck.

I had a talk with Big Mitt and also with his city editor, a young chap named Jack Woodson, who was handsome enough to have made the movies if he had later crashed Hollywood.

STEVE told me he would have work for me in the late months of spring and the coming summer. At the time, he and Woodson were the staff, although they may have had a woman doing social items.

With what I made from an occasional dance job and what I picked up playing solo or holding a cue for the house in a peapool game, I managed to subsist.

I got no money for solo or pool, but when the drinks were called up, I took a package of cigarettes. In this manner I got a corner on Melachrin cigarettes.

I was a light smoker, and as I usually obtained from ten to twenty packages in an evening, I accumulated quite a stock. Finally, the Nome supply of that particular brand was exhausted and no more could arrive until the boats returned in June.

It happened that an executive of one of the larger mining companies smoked nothing but Melachrins. He discovered that I had a supply and he was glad to take them off my hands at a considerable premium over the regular selling price.

The nights were particularly long when the miners were out on the creeks. I invented many dodges to make the time pass. One handsome young bartender at the Board of Trade Saloon would inveigle me into a dummy solo game. He knew I had no money to lose, so he made the rule that if he won, nothing happened, but if I won he opened a bottle of champagne on the house.

If I had a good run of luck, some mornings when he went off shift we would both be feeling pretty rich, as an old uncle of mine used to say when he was "half-seas over." Charley would then insist that we make the rounds of his competitors and on several occasions he went back to work the next evening without ever seeing his bed.

Perhaps it was the Alaska climate, but hang-overs seemed to dissipate more quickly in Nome. Or it may have been the never-ending confusion in my mind as to whether it was night or day. In the winters the days and nights were both dark; in the summer, both light. I kept marking off a calendar to try to keep the time straight, but even then I would often lose half a day somewhere.

WE DID NOT altogether lack for amusement in Nome. Besides pool, cards, and drinking, in the winter we had basketball, long distance indoor foot races and indoor baseball. I never could get interested in indoor baseball, probably because I was too devout a fan of the outdoor game.

Nome had several good basketball teams. The one representing the Arctic Brotherhood was fast enough to go

Outside and hold its own with the best teams in the States.

The real winter sport, however, was indoor footracing for distances of from two miles to ten. There were some crack runners among the Swedes, Finns and other Scandinavians that so largely peopled Nome. One of the best, as I recall, was a man named Burman or Berman. A favorite, too, was a Greek saloon porter whom we called Mike. He seldom won a race, but was always trying. He had the backing of a lot of the gamblers and liquor men.

The real champ was a Japanese called Wada. He came from Fairbanks where he had cleaned up the best in that camp. They say that he indirectly effected the reformation of one of the dance hall girls. She put up a thousand dollars on him at odds of five to one. With her winnings she went back to her family and is now a respected member of society.

Wada was in Southern California last winter, trying to get someone to grubstake him for another try at gold mining. I did not hear how he made out. He had left when I tried to find him in Pomona.

As spring approached, the thoughts of the residents of Nome turned to the greatest sport of all—our National Game. Fort Davis, the military post a few miles down the beach from Nome, had a good ball club and the previous summer had defeated the best the town could get together.

In the spring there was talk of forming a four-team league and having some real baseball. As a dyed-in-the-wool fan, I horned in at every conference and when the league was formed was made official scorekeeper.

Previously, games had been played on the beach and hard-hit balls made it tough on the outfielders. Unless they were good swimmers, they had to wait for the Bering tide to bring the ball ashore. That spring it was decided to build a real ball ground worthy of a city like Nome.

It was through my connection with the sport that I was finally able to land a newspaper job on the Golddigger and take a small part in the political life of the city.

The third in this series of four articles about early days in Nome by John B. Wallace will appear in the November Number.

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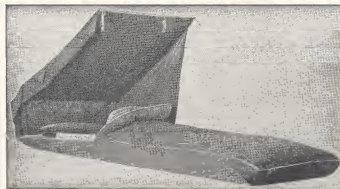
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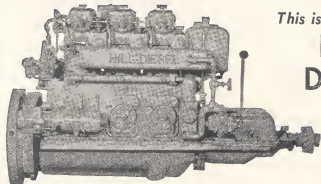
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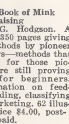
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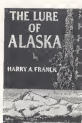
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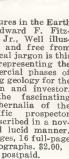


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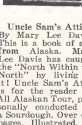
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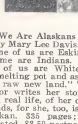
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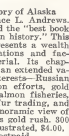


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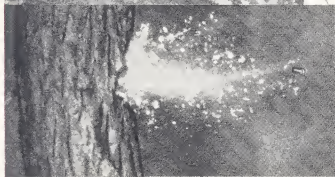
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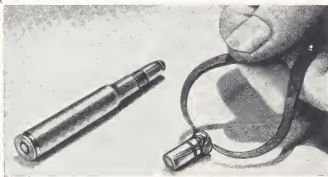


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